Life Sketch of

Mary Lavina Lee Moulton

Daughter of

Thomas Octavious and Ellen Tadwell Lee

Written by - her daughter
Bertha Elizabeth Moulton Bowman
Blackfoot, Idaho
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Mary Lavina Lee Moulton

Mary Lavina Lee Moulton was born in Worsper, Yorkshire, England on August 26, 1846 to Thomas Octavious and Ellen Tadwell Lee. She was baptised in 1855.

They lived in Worsper for two years during which time the oldest child, Emma, died of smallpox. She was not quite two years old at the time of her death. Shortly after Emma died, the family moved back to Sheffield, England to live.

Mother's father was called on a mission to Barnsley, England to preach the gospel.

Mother's mother, two brothers, John and Orson, and herself lived in the Social Hall, (mission home) while their father was on his mission. Mary's mother cleaned the hall and upper room for Council Meetings. The L.D.S. missionaries from America held meetings in the hall. Her family felt it was a priveledge to meet the missionaries.

After her father had been gone on his mission for a year, the church authorities called him back home. He had been true to his mission. Upon her father's arrival home, the family moved back to a private home to live.

Mother's parents were very religious and had a desire to migrate to America. They saved their money to go with immigrants to Utah. Finally, they had saved enough money for passage for two. It was decided that Mary's mother and brother, John, would go first. They left England in 1860 for America. What strong courage and faith it must have taken for Mary's mother to leave part of her family behind, not knowing whether they would ever be together again.

Mother was only 13 and her brother, Orson, was 10 years old when their mother left them in England with their father while she and John left for America. Mother worked in homes to hepl earn money so that she, her father, and brother could leave England and go to America to be with her mother and John. Mary worked for a dressmaker who did sewing for the rich people. It was Mary's job to deliver the dresses to the customer's homes. She would carry the dresses stacked across her arms.

After saving their money for three years, Mary, her father and Orson set sail on the ship "Amazon" for America. The "Amazon" was the 186th Mormon ship and left the London port for America on May 4, 1863 with 882 people on board. After three days out at sea, the passengers were all sea sick so the captain, William Bramwell, ordered the ship anchored for three days. Two terrible storms were encountered whild crossing the sea. There was one death and one birth on the ship. The new baby, born on the voyage, was named Amazon after the ship.

America was in the midst of the Civil War when they arrived in New York. The nation was asking for volunteers to fight in the conflict. Mary and Orson were in constant fear that their father would be forced to leave them alone in America and go to battle because of the shortage of men.

There was also much strife in New York against the Mormons, so Joseph F. Smith and George Q. Cannon had the saints concealed in luggage cars on the train so that they misht be safe. They traveled as far west as St. Joseph, Missouri in the luggage cars.

At St. Joseph, Missouri, they joined a Mormon immigrant company that was going to Utah. Before they left, Mary became very ill. Her father got a doctor and some medicine and they kept on going with the immigration company. Mary was now 16 years old and Orson was 13. Mary's father drove one of the teams and they slowly plodded their way across the plains. They had to walk most of the way to Utah, but they all did their share of the work. Mary would gather buffalo chips to make the fire with when it was near camping time. They sang and tried to maintain light hearts as they traveled toward their chosen goal----Utah. While on the plains, one young lady died and was buried by the wayside. This brought sadness to them all. The rest of the trip was a fairly pleasant journey.

In the middle of October, 1863, the immigration company arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah where they were met by their loved ones. It was a very happy occassion for Mary's family to be together again after a three year separation. They stayed in Salt Lake City for three weeks and then went to Heber, Utah to make their home. Her father bought a lot and they built a small log house. Here they commecned pioneering in a new settlement. In the summer of 1864, Mary's father sold the small log home and bought ten acres of land east of Heber, Utah. They lived in a dugout near where the Heber City Mill now stands.

Here the family helped to build up a Mormon community. They were active in church and civic affairs. They were very thankful to their Heavenly Father that they had been priveledged to come to America and to the land of Zion, that their children might more fully appreciate and enjoy the blessings of God and live among the chosen people, the Latter Day Saints. The whole family was re-baptised and reconfirmed in Heber, Utah.

Mary's father was engaged in rock quarrying to get material to build his family a confortable home to enjoy life in. He was caught in a rock slide that crushed him so badly that he died a few hours later. This was in March 1865.

His death was such a great blow to the family that they felt they could not stand it. They prayed earnestly for strength and courage to endure the hardships and stay true to the church.

Mary was a very pretty girl with drak brown eyes and dark hair. She was soon courted by one of the very best young men in the valley, William Denton Moulton, a pioneer of 1856. Just four months after her father's death, Mary and William were married by Joseph S. Murdock. July 24 1865.

Many happy days were spent together in their tidy little log cabin where they started out in married life. Their home was a meeting place for the young boys and girls to spend their Sunday afternoons. Mary had no cook stove for the first few years so she cooked their meals and baked their bread on a tripod in the fireplace. Her neighbors said that you could eat off of Mary's floors because they were so spotless.

Mary's widowed mother and John went back to Salt Lake City to secure jobs. Orson lived with Mary and William. John started walking from Salt Lake City to Heber to spend the Christmas holidays with Mary, William, and Orson. A terrible blizzard came up. The roads were not staked that winter and John lost his way. He was buried in the snow for eight days before a young man named George Galloway dug him out of his snow grave. George sent John to Mary's home with another man. John was put into a barrel of water to thaw out his badly frozen body. He suffered untold agony for three weeks and died on January 18, 1868.

A few years later, they bought a large ranch about nine miles north of Heber, Utah. They moved here and named it Moultonville, by which it was known for many years. It is still sometimes called Moulton's Ranch but later called Elkhorn.

Mary's husband, William, went to Florence Nebraska in June 1868 to bring immigrants to Utah. He drove two yoke of oxen. They had to wait in Florence for six weeks waiting for the saints to arrive from the east. Mary did her part while he was away by milking the cows and the other many things that are necessary to do on a ranch.

On December 15, 1868, they went to the Endowment House at Salt Lake to be sealed for time and eternity.

The year after William's return from Nebraska, the crops failed and living conditions were so bad that William left to cut ties for the Union Pacific Railroad, that was slowly wending westward. Mary was left again to care for the ranch.

Mary was small in stature but was brave as all pioneers had to be. Her husband secured a contract to supply the Ontario Mine at Park City, Utah with all kinds of meat and milk products. They built up a very prosperous business that employed many men and young boys. Smoking and drinking were not allowed on the ranch. If one of their help did, both Mary and William would do all they could to help them quit. The ones who would not quit were sent home to their parents.

They built a large 15 room rock home with 3 large basement cellers. One of these was a milk room where Mary strained the milk into pans and skimmed off the cream to be churned into butter to be sold to the mine and milk customers. Mary would churn from 30 to 40 pounds of butter at once. She would sell the butter for 50 cents a pound. Mary sheared the wool from sheep, washed it, corded it, spun it, and made her own cloth. She did all her sewing by hand.

A branch of the LDS church was organized in Heber and William was put in as Presiding Elder. Most of the meetings were held at their home. Sinde the neighbors lived from a mile to several miles apart, the meetings were always held in the homes, as there was no church.

Their life was a very happy one with love and devotion for each other. They had been married for seven years and had no children. This brought sadness to both. Since plural marriage was being practiced, many advised William to take another wife. Mary, being of a very jealous nature, hesitated for sometime. She prayed earnestly to her Heavenly Father for guidance in doing what was right. One of the Apostles of the church promised her that if she consented to a second wife, she would have children. She finally consented and William married Mary Ann Davis, daughter of their neighbor William Davis. The Davis ranch was one and a half miles south of the Moulton ranch. They all lived in the same house and ate at the same table.

One year after their plural marriage began, both wives gave birth to sons. Mary's son was born on November 21, 1874 at Moultonville, Utah and was named William Thomas Denton Moulton. On July 17, 1876, her second son, Orson Lee Moulton, was born. On September 23, 1877, they lost their first child. He died at their home, bringing the first real sorrow to their own family. The were blessed with three more children. The next year a baby girl, named Sarah Ellen after her two grandmothers was born on June 28, 1878. A son named Ranch was born on June 23, 1880. On October 13, 1882, Bertha Elizabeth was born.

On January 14, 1883, Mary was called upon to part with her dearly beloved husband leaving her with four children, Bertha being only three months old. William's second wife was also left with four children. This seemed to be more than Mary could stand. Her duties were two fold in rearing her family plus the added responsibility of a large ranch and a growing business. Her mother, Ellen Tadwell Lee, was a great comfort to her in her loneliness and sorrow. Had it not been for her religion and her faith in the hereafter, and her desire to be of service to her church, it would have been harder to stand.

William was just in the prime of his life. He had lived a full and abundant life, serving his church and fellowmen, for the 40 short years of his life.

Mary continued to work in the little branch of the church in which she lived. She trusted the Lord for guidance and aid in all she undertook to do. She did temple work in the Logan and Salt Lake Temples.

Mary's son, Ranch, died on December 13, 1888. He was only eight and a half years old. This once again brought sorrow into her life. Mary became very ill after Ranch's death and it seemed that she could not be consoled. One night her son, Ranch, appeared to her at the side of her bed. He looked very sad and this made Mary feel that she was making him unhappy by mourning so. She prayed for strength to get better and began to recover.

Mary's hired help learned to love her for her kindness and consideration for them. She always did their washing, ironing, mending, and cooking.

Mary continued to live in Moultonville until all her children were married and then she sold the ranch and moved to Heber, Utah in a little brick house just a half block from her two daughters and four blocks from her son.

Here she labored in the church as she had always done. She taught Relief Society for many years. She was an active member of the "For Get Me Not" camp of the Utah Pioneers of Heber. Mary held many positions in the auxiliary organizations of the church. She was a devout and faithful member who bore a strong testimony to the truthfulness of its teachings.

Both of William's wives had a great love for each other and the two families were brought up as one. Mary ever defended plural marriage and was thankful she had lived in it.

Her daughter, Bertha Elizabeth Moulton Bowman, and family moved to Idaho in 1916. Her son moved away and her daughter Sarah Ellen, (called Nellie) died on March 10, 1923. This death was indeed a great sorrow to Mary as Sarah Ellen lived just across the street from her and they had spent many happy hours together.

Sarah Ellen's seven children now took refuge in the love of their grandmother. Mary was kind, understanding and loving to them and in return, the children gave her loving care. Mary's greif at the loss of this daughter was expressed in the following words she wrote to her daughter, Bertha, in Idaho.

Was there not amid the millions,
One who's life was not so dear;
Could they not have found another,
Left this well beloved one here?

Mary labored at the Red Cross Headquarters in Heber, Utah during the World War I. She knitted socks, sweaters and other clothing. She also inspected the work of others to see that there were no knots left in the socks for our soldiers to make their feet sore.

In the summer of 1922, Mary went to visit her daughter, Bertha and Son-in-law John Bowman in Riverside, Idaho. While she was in Idaho, work came that her only living relative, her brother, Orson Henry Lee, had died on November 15, 1922, at Heber, Utah.

In the summer of 1927 she moved to Idaho to make her home. She was now 81 years of age and her health was poor. Here she did beautiful knit and crochet work until a few weeks before her death at 12:30 midnight on December 3, 1931. Her son, Orson L. Moulton, accompanied her body to Heber, Utah. Bertha and her husband and six children left by auto. Funeral services were held in the Wasatch Stake T bernacle on Sunday, December 6, 1931. Bishop Fred G. Carlile of the Heber Second Ward was in charge of the services. Joseph Moulton, a brother of her husband, offered the invocation and A. Y. Duke gave the benediction. Musical numbers, mostly in keeping with her requests were rendered. Her grandaughter, Nellie Moulton Earl of Salt Lake City, sang a solo, "Ever of Thee I'm Fondly Dreaming". (This was a favorite song of her husband and he had often sang it to her.) A violin solo by Delmar Dickson, "I'll Take You to your Home Kathlene", and "Going Home" by Earl H. Smith were also presented. The speakers were Bishop Joseph A. Rasband, President H. Clay Cummings, President David A. Broadbent and Bishop Fred G. Carlile. Each emphasized the splendid qualities of her life; cheerful, even under great trials; faithful in duty and ever willing to lend a helping hand to those in need; strength of character; faith and devotion to the cause of God and her fellowmen. They said she would be missed in services and among the people generally for the good she had done.

She was a wonderful duaghter, mother and grandmother and friend. She was lovingly called "Aunt Mary" by many. She lived to see all her own family laid away, her Father, Mother, brothers Orson and John and baby sister Emma. She left to mourn her passing, her two children, Orson L. Moulton and Bertha E. Bowman and seventeen grandchildren. She was a faithful Latter Day Saint and though great had been her sorrows, greater will be her reward in Heaven.